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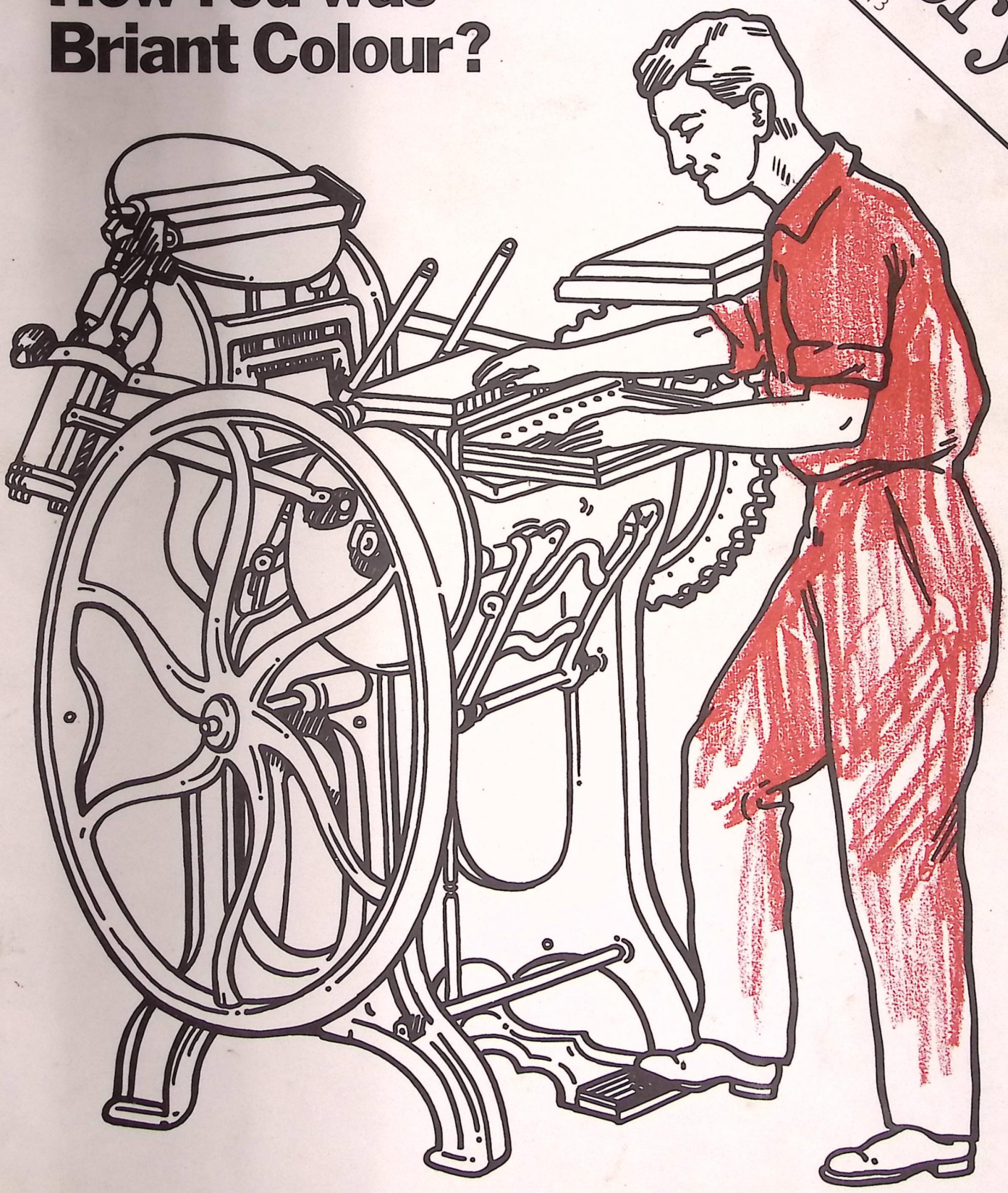
inside story

No 10 August 1973

How red was Briant Colour?



COLOUR ME

BRIANT COLOUR WORK-IN

NEWS

ISSUE No2

THIS IS WHERE IT STOPS!

The aim of our struggle is quite clear to everyone — we demand the right to work! In the printing industry, and particularly in London, we have seen closure after closure at an ever-increasing rate. On page 2 of this edition is a list which is long but by no means complete — in fact it is only the tip of the iceberg.

These closures have meant unemployment for thousands of London printworkers, and when the numbers over the whole industry are totted up the figures are staggering. To the people who are responsible for these closures they are just numbers on a balance sheet, but in reality each one who is thrown out of a job represents a family whose security and hopes for a decent standard of living and future have been destroyed.

We say THIS IS WHERE IT STOPS, NO MORE CLOSURES IN PRINT! THE TIDE OF CLOSURES MUST BE TURNED NOW, AT BRIANT COLOUR. The fight is in print on this occasion, but it is a fight that is common to all workers everywhere. Those who support us in this fight are striking a blow for all workers who demand the right to work.

cover story

'The right to the benefits of modern technology ...'

In June 1972 the printworkers at Briant Colour, faced by its sudden closure, refused to accept their fate and occupied the factory instead. They started a work-in, the basis of a campaign to keep their jobs, which has lasted for 13 months. Now, as a new owner takes over at Briants, a correspondent describes the work-in as seen by the printworkers' leader, Bill Freeman - an ex-Labour man who has now joined the Communist Party.

Photographs: Workers Press.

The 13-month Briant Colour work-in was inevitably invested with every aspiration of the left. So when it didn't turn out to be the first act of the revolution - nor a dress rehearsal, nor even an attempt to improvise the script - the criticisms crashed in from all sides.

But Briants were running - simultaneously - an industrial dispute, a business and a publicity campaign. Of course a leader, Bill Freeman, emerged. (So he runs a fat old Jaguar and is slightly ashamed of it: if he hadn't been a sharp operator on a bit of an ego-trip, Briants might never have survived.)

Faced with a lightning shutdown, Briants had a choice of three actions: acquiescence, the formation of a co-operative or a work-in on the lines of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. Acquiescence having been ruled out, the decision which badly hurt some of the far left was the rejection of a co-operative, which happened right at the beginning.

Forming a co-operative would have meant raising money to buy the factory. It would have meant a desperate attempt to survive as a socialist island in a capitalist sea - which would have been the only source of supplies and the main source of printing contracts. And it might have forced one set of workers into the appalling position of making fellow-workers redundant.

The majority at Briants were not ready for this. They opted for what Bill Freeman calls 'the right to the benefits of modern technology, the right to support their families adequately' - for a struggle to confront the system, to

prove that Briants under temporary workers' control was a going concern worth a buyer's money.

That understood, their achievement can't be slighted.

For the first time in the rapidly contracting print industry workers refused to be made redundant, to be treated like so many dustbins. They demonstrated that a highly complex modern factory can be run under workers' control. They fought a rearguard action, maybe, but it was against the immense power of the establishment alliance between law, property and high finance.

And as for betraying the labour movement (some critics have said so) the work-in was only made possible by Briants' long history of trade unionism and co-operation between all four print unions - National Society of Operative Printers, Graphical and Media Personnel (still called NATSOPA), the National Graphical Association, the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades and the Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers, Engravers and Process Workers.

Briants, in the Old Kent Road, south east London, was a small, top-quality colour print works with one of the highest-paid work forces in the industry ... until 2.15 pm on Wednesday, 21 June last year. That was when the management announced without warning that the firm was finished 'because if was running at a loss' - and everyone could go home. Threequarters of an hour later the factory was occupied and the directors evicted.

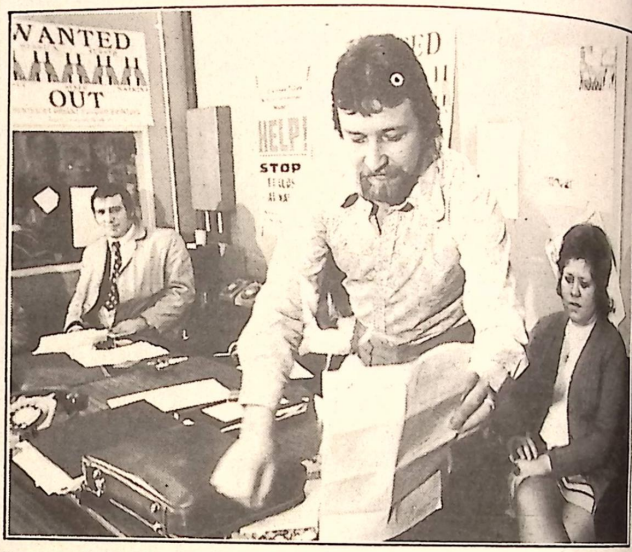
The four-union shop stewards' committee had called an instant mass meeting to recommend rejecting the shutdown. They went on to organise security - barricades, locks and chains on the gates, plus food and beds. By 7 pm the debate on their political aims had begun.

They decided on a work-in instead of a simple occupation because it was good publicity: even anti-trade unionists could identify with the right to work. Only then did they agree to appeal to left-wing organisations and to the unions for help.

Bill Freeman says the work-in had to be established before the unions were contacted - otherwise they would simply have started redundancy negotiations. 'Very often you have to put them in a position where they have no room to manoeuvre.' Bill Freeman took this line from then on, which didn't endear him to union executives.

SOGAT gave support and money at once; SLADE, NGA and NATSOPA came in soon after.

The Communist Party, the International Socialists, the Socialist Labour League and the International Marxist Group sent helpers. Since Bill Freeman - originally a Labour Party member - ended the work-in as a Communist, his chief praise is for the CP, closely followed by the IS. He doesn't rate the SLL or the IMG very highly.



Briant Colour printers leader Bill Freeman burns liquidators' writ.

Battle against the liquidator, Patrick Granville White, began at once. The shop stewards refused to talk about liquidation - only about ways of saving Briants.

'He agreed to meet us is he could come in the front door and talk in the boardroom,' says Bill Freeman. 'We told him he could come in the works entrance like everyone else and that the boardroom was in use as a women's dormitory. He came in on our terms and met us in the machine room.'

Mr Granville White was a formidable enemy with the law behind him. In February he secured a High Court order for the surrender of the factory and payment of costs and damages. Instead of appearing in court, Briants held a mass protest demonstration.

The second court order in April was against Bill Freeman personally, requiring him to hand over the firm's books. The court even sent him £2 as his fare to the hearing.

But Granville White himself set aside the court order when it came to the crunch. 'Had they seized any of us,'

says Bill Freeman, 'the reaction from the labour movement would have cost the economy far more than Briants was worth.

'The rights of the working class were never won in a court of law. As we saw it, the only way was not to recognise the law at all. Once you walk up the courtroom steps, you've had it.'

Several would-be buyers were turned down by the work-in: they were either asset-strippers or had moved in because they thought Briants desperate enough to accept absurd terms. Mr Granville White, who could probably have sold the firm's assets separately for around £500,000, was finally compelled to sell Briants intact for £260,000.

The battle with the unions took in both general industrial strategy and details of internal organisation. All the unions sent officials who, by rule, expected to take charge. But they couldn't agree tactics among themselves, let alone with the Briant workers, and were relegated to advisory status.

The work-in asked the unions to ensure that highly specialised printing which could have gone to Briants was blacked by every print shop in the country. Union bureaucrats refused, partly through fear the National Industrial Relations Court would be invoked. They refused even to suggest mandatory chapel meetings to print shops competing with Briants.

Half the energies of the Briant Colour workers, says Bill Freeman, were diverted to difficulties with the unions. 'But it's hard to knock them. They continued to pay us although they disagreed with our policies. Some did us proud.'

SLADE, however, faltered. It pulled out all its members early this year, though many had already played a big part in the work-in.

Day-to-day running of the factory was organised by elected committees, dealing with production, security, policy decisions. The shops stewards' committee was responsible for carrying out their directions.

[redacted]

Everything was organised in shifts and everyone worked five shifts a week - or got no benefit. Some preferred day work, some night; others rotated duties.

Married women were included in night security duty, which needed backing from their husbands and many wives of workers took jobs for the first time to help out family finances.

And office work like typing and manning the switchboard had to be done. NATSOPA supplied some typists - while a floor sweeper came forward with a natural talent for accountancy.

The biggest practical obstacle to economic survival was that Briants had no typesetting machinery: this hindered printing for the labour movement, mostly words. They had no designers or readers, which meant amateur layouts and sometimes spelling mistakes - though many sympathisers came in to help.

The workers themselves went out and

Briant Colour workers in the machine room in June 1972 soon after they began their work-in. It was here that the shop stewards' committee met the liquidator after he'd tried to insist on using the boardroom: 'He came in on our terms', said Bill Freeman.

Right, Briant Colour workers on the march to Pentonville Prison on 23 July 1972 after the jailing of the five dockers and, below, Briants protest meeting.

won commercial orders. And they charged the unions commercial rates. 'a slight redeployment of union funds' was how Bill Freeman puts it.

They turned down several printing jobs - including some porn. But their refusal to print some of the political material they were offered - eg Islington Gutter Press which carried support for the Stoke Newington Eight - alienated natural allies. Their reason was the fear it would damage their own politically limited cause - or perhaps the fear they simply wouldn't get paid. However Briants did print some things for the labour movement and the Left, including the famous poster for the five dockers jailed in Pentonville and a Tolstoy pamphlet, Slavery of our times.

But a 24-hour factory occupation brings other problems, which worsened as enthusiasm waned. No Saturday-night boozing for the boys on duty, for instance; football in the yard for some while others were working; accusations that some people weren't pulling their weight.

A NATSOPA section complained that they didn't mind paying for beds or even for a television set - but not for a colour television set. Then there was the old Lady Bountiful syndrome: Briants, as the deserving poor, were expected by many to be grateful for what they got.

Yet - petty quarrels, degenerating morale, growing greed and all - somehow it worked. The buyer, Peter Bentley, was due to take over on 21 July. Right up to the last minute the shop stewards' committee was arguing him out of such infelicitous demands as a no-strike clause. At one point, says Bill Freeman, Briants nearly went on strike for the first time in 12 years...

The ulcerous question of a co-operative was discussed over and over again, says Bill Freeman. Others outside the factory say it was never put to open debate. Certainly some workers supported the project.

But the majority decision was for staying within the system: a co-operative would have been forced to adopt the rules of capitalism - and economic survival would have depended on the very structure whose basis was being challenged.

The firm needs a yearly turnover of £1 million to keep the workers in the style to which they're accustomed - £70-£80 a week for craftsmen, £40 for floor sweepers and, Bill Freeman says, starving within the system doesn't make people socialists.

The fact remains: they all coped for over a year on less than half pay. Out of 150-odd original workers, 85 stayed on till the end. Of these, 55 were guaranteed jobs when Peter Bentley took over; the others were guaranteed stop-gap work by the unions and will be phased back into Briants as business picks up.

According to Bill Freeman the future lies inside the unions - 'neither in the

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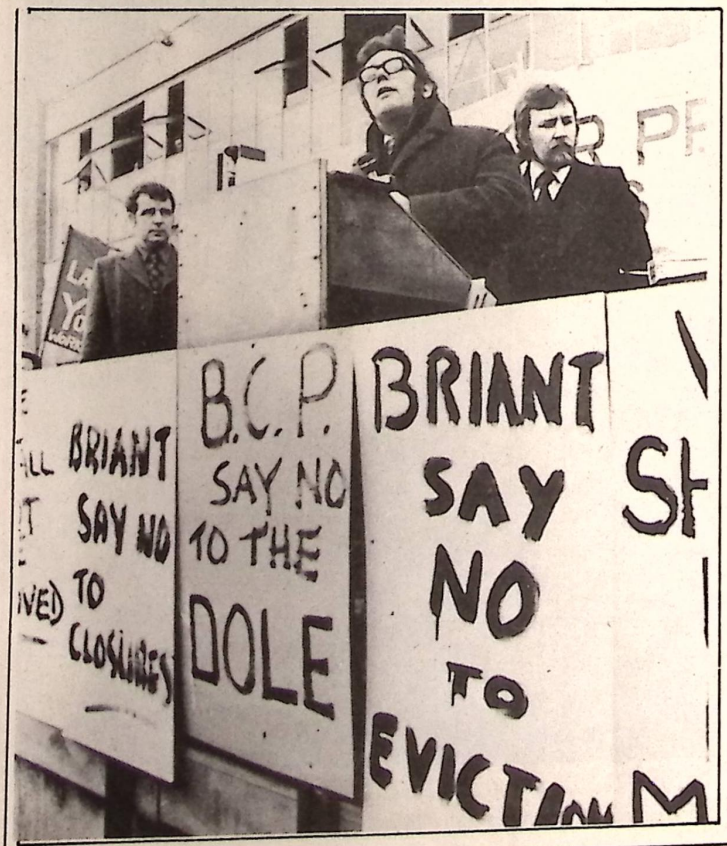

ultra-left or splinter groups', nor in an attempt to set up an alternative. 'Some of us have been at Briants 10 years, building consciousness, building leadership, building a grassroots organisation. That was why we were able to deal with this thing.

'We've been criticised by the ultra-left for misleading the workers. But leaders can lead only as fast as the workers want to go. Some people want revolution for breakfast tomorrow: they're not prepared to put in years and years of hard work.

'The way ahead has got to be through education and understanding. We were only part of the long struggle to convince ordinary people of their rights.

'After Briants, the job is to achieve policies within the unions of fighting every closure. The next closure will be won quicker, the one after that quicker still - and the one after that, we might not have to fight at all.'

Time Out: the money men move in

Readers of the Evening Standard, the Guardian, Private Eye and the Journalist will not need reminding that a lot has happened at Time Out in the past few months. In fact more people recently have been reading about the magazine than reading it - Time Out itself being curiously reluctant to explain to its readers what's been going on. And, as our media correspondent reports, there are a few things which even the Time Out staff don't know about.

In INSIDE STORY 6 (November 1972) we noted that John Lloyd's appointment as caretaker editor left Tony Elliott in control of Time Out. We pointed out that as majority shareholder he could 'move back in or sell the magazine to IPC whenever he felt like it'. Elliott's reported deal with Rothschilds merchant bank still leaves him with control since he owns slightly more than 50 per cent of the shares: the shareholders bought out are Tony Elliott's mother, who had 20 per cent, and advertisement director, John Leaver, 26 per cent.

Rothschilds are said to be paying £60,000 for their minority share, which makes Time Out itself worth at least £120,000. This represents a fair improvement over previous offers for the magazine: Haymarket, publishers of Campaign and the proud owners of most of what was Cornmarket Press, are said to have offered £70,000 for the whole magazine last autumn. There have been several other unsuccessful bids and approaches, one master-minded by Philip Kleinman, editor of Campaign's main rival, Adweek.

A key role in these financial manoeuvres has been played by Frank Pearson, a City stockbroker who works for the large and well-established firm of Simon and Coates. Pearson, who was at Keele University with Elliott, has been advising him on Time Out's business affairs since early 1972. And it was

Tony Elliott and Michel Boyer by Time Out photographer Roger Perry.

Pearson who inspired an advertising and promotions analysis of the magazine which concluded that it should improve its image by remaining 'radical' but not 'left wing in the orthodox sense'.

For months both Tony Elliott and Frank Pearson have wanted to get rid of John Leaver in an attempt to improve Time Out's advertising revenue. Leaver, meanwhile - like the rest of the magazine's staff - has become disenchanted with Elliott and is himself anxious to leave. Now he's got a golden handshake of £30,000 and the way is clear for a Pearson nominee - or possibly the man himself - to take Leaver's place.

John Leaver has never been drawn to the hustling cut-throat world of professional space salesmen: he belongs to a gentler, more casual era. He got his shares because he was one of the founders of Time Out with Tony Elliott and his girlfriend Stephanie Hughes - she was later bought out by Tony. These three, who had all been at Keele University, were the first directors of Time Out Ltd, while Tony Elliott's mother, who became the fourth shareholder, provided the £70 necessary to print the first issue.

Time Out first appeared in August 1968, published from an address in Princedale Road, Holland Park, then the high street of London's fashionable underground scene: Oz and Release were both operating from Princedale Road; later Ink began its short life there.

From the beginning Time Out was a What's On for the young, listing London entertainments and events free. Thus it was very different from the other underground papers: whereas they might give a page to 'free community ads' Time Out based its whole readership appeal on performing this 'service' function. But, like the other underground papers, Time Out at first depended on circulation rather than advertising.

There was always a strong link between the activities covered and the magazine itself: early issues were sold at the places listed and, as Time Out grew, it attracted as contributors people who were often directly connected with what they were selecting or writing about. There was a relaxed, friendly atmosphere about the place in those days. Wages were low, £15 a week, but nobody seemed to mind: if you're doing your own thing, you can't insist on money too. Nobody seemed to mind, either, that Tony Elliott and John Leaver, nominally paid the same as everyone else, used to make regular use of petty cash for meals and taxis.

One staff member summed up the style of those days by saying 'Tony Elliott was prepared to let the people he had recruited do as they liked. He was never an editor in the classical sense of assisting and directing writers. The tradition was almost that the boring work of compiling listings entitled one to write not just what one wished but also how one wished.' And, as readers will have noticed, there was never any sub-editing at Time Out.

Sometimes this casual approach seemed to parody itself - as when the sports section made a brief appearance quite early on, then died, only to be revived this year. Asked why it had been killed off in the first place, Tony Elliott replied 'The guy who was producing it didn't want to do it any more.' But people went on buying Time Out in increasing numbers.

Gradually, imperceptibly, it ceased to be an underground paper. It came out on time - and with increasing frequency: the second issue followed the first after three weeks; soon it was a regular fortnightly and in May 1971 it went weekly. The circulation went up steadily, from 2,000 to about 40,000 today. And, as the magazine grew in size and scope, it attracted more advertising - in spite of the relaxed attitude of the sales staff.

At the end of 1970 Time Out started carrying stories not directly related to its sections. There were rumours, a column largely devoted to friends and enemies of the staff, occasional community stories - and the even more occasional piece about planning. This news and feature coverage expanded when Time Out went weekly, faced by the challenge of Ink. (Ink in reply had its own guide to London entertainment, 'Inkweek' - of which the less said the better.) David May, who had previously written for Frendz, came in to do news.

Time Out started making a real reputation outside the arts field with the coverage, starting in 1971, of the Jake Prescott-Ian Purdie and the Stoke Newington Eight trials. That this happened at all was due to the pressure

of the left wingers on the magazine, David May, now supported by Tony Bunyan, who had contributed the earliest Agitprop columns in 1969.

One of the consequences was the first contretemps with W H Smiths, who had agreed to take Time Out after it went weekly. Smiths' lawyer objected to material 'in contempt of court' and staff spent most of one night tearing out the offending pages. From then on, news and features were read by a lawyer before the magazine was printed.

At first, Tony Elliott operated in the same fashion towards the newly political coverage with sympathy: in fact, it has been said that he was positive towards the news group's ideas. Certainly, he allowed the Ian and Jake Defence Committee to work from Time Out's building, and the famous Guardian ad in early 1972, signed by 'People seeking Justice for Prescott and Purdie' was allowed to give 374 Grays Inn Road as a contact address.

As Ink collapsed, revived itself, then died - and Seven Days too came and went - Time Out found a new role employing some of the survivors of these disasters: Neil Lyndon had come from an earlier closure, Idiot International; John Lloyd, came from Ink and Phil Kelly from Seven Days. Several of these new recruits accelerated an already clear tendency for some Time Out staff to become more aggressively left wing, both editorially and as workers. In the summer of 1972 and NUJ chapel was formed: the writing was on the wall.

[redacted]

There was, even then, something to fight about. Time Out was making money - and the money was not going to the staff but in all sorts of other directions. Back in 1970 Time Out had lost £4,000 on an abortive attempt to run a Manchester edition. In 1971-2 the magazine ran two big conferences, including 'Freedom and Responsibility in the Media', which ended in gay abandon as a free-for-all - and a spectacular financial loss. Time Out produced programmes for several pop festivals, which lost money, and for Rainbow, London's pop palace, which lost a lot of money: when Sundancer, John Morris' Rainbow company, went bust in 1972, Time Out was owed £2,000.

Elliott himself was business manager for most of this period, though he was for a time assisted by Pete Steadman, an engaging Australian hustler with no more idea than Elliott himself of how it should be done. By the middle of 1972 Time Out - with a weekly income of £4,000 - owed £35,000.

Mike Radford who, like Steadman, had served his time at Ink but was a more serious political operator then took over as business manager. Not surprisingly he was soon very critical of Elliott - as were many of the staff.

At the same time, and possibly because of the financial situation, Elliott became less and less sympathetic to the ideas of the news group, which had by this stage been joined by Tony Bunyan's brother Chris. Increasingly the staff meetings, which were more and more conflict-ridden were turned against the news group.

[redacted]

In the autumn of 1972 the staff militants and Mike Radford - with the reluctant acquiescence of John Leaver - confronted Elliott and forced him to take a holiday, editing the second edition of Time Out's London guide. He was assured by some of the leading conspirators that they would install John Lloyd as editor in his place. The magazine was to continue as usual - though it was to become financially viable.

But the staff, swayed by newsroom militants Tony Bunyan and David May, were not inclined to accept this silence. They set up a working party to enquire into the best way of running the magazine trying to reconcile those who wanted an editor - and had promised Elliott they would install one - with those who wanted a 'collective' system. In theory the collective won.

[redacted]

But it never had a chance.
What most of the staff wanted was to be left alone to do their own thing, as they had been allowed to do in the early days. When Elliott engineered a challenge, the collective collapsed - under strong pressure from John Lloyd, Mike Radford and John Leaver. The occasion for the challenge came in December 1972, when W H Smiths refused to take an issue of the magazine - which their lawyer had passed - because 62-year-old Bill Barron, Smith's notoriously right wing magazine

buyer, took a dislike to the Ed Badajos cartoon on the front page: it showed a naked female giant picking a gorilla from her crotch.

Elliott came into the office and, in front of several staff members who made no move to stop him, phoned the printers. He told them not to print a page denouncing Smiths which had been written for the occasion. Using as the excuse the need for an individual who could confront and face down Elliott, the pro-editor faction installed John Lloyd, who won a staff referendum, in the post of editor.

Once firmly in the editor's chair Lloyd found what many others had found. Most of the staff did not know what an editor was for and resented interference, while Tony Elliott regarded the editor as someone to do what his own unpopularity with the staff prevented him from doing. Lloyd resigned in March 1973 - and then the fun really started.

[redacted]

In the previous month the Time Out NUJ chapel had put in a substantial wage claim. From March onwards the two issues - who was to replace Lloyd and what was going to happen to the wage claim - became part of a general struggle for power at Time Out. Many of the more dramatic details of this conflict have already been reported. But it is worth mentioning one or two which have not.

Not only did chapel representatives twice ask Tony Elliott, before Michel Boyer's appointment as editor, whether there were any candidates for the staff to talk to - they were told that there were none- but a Time Out directors meeting had actually agreed that candidates should meet the staff before any selection took place. So when Elliott unsuccessfully attempted to foist Boyer on the Time Out staff he was not only ignoring the expressed wishes of the staff but also those of his fellow directors.

[redacted]

Boyer was not the second, third or fourth choice as editor: he was Tony Elliott's first choice. Perhaps with the intention of enhancing his own reputation for Machiavellian intrigue Mike Radford, who'd met Boyer in the Free Communications Group (RIP), proposed him to Elliott.

The other candidates, whose existence was so strenuously denied, were Roger Hutchinson, editor of IT, and Geoff Wansell, once the Times' own underground correspondent and now firmly ensconced in commercial radio. Paul Foot was not approached except to provide names of other possibles. After toying with Hutchinson and Wansell - though there is no evidence that either would have taken the job - Elliott decided on Boyer.

[redacted]

Elliott's attempted sacking of Phil Kelly and Chris Bunyan, the two chapel officers negotiating the Time Out pay claim, is given an additional bizarre twist by the following fact: John Lloyd had previously given two people in the newsroom, Chris Bunyan and David May, one month's warning that if their work didn't improve they'd be sacked. (Lloyd withdrew the threat after chapel protests.) But so far from wishing to add Phil Kelly's name to this shortlist Lloyd held the view that Kelly was 'the best in the newsroom' and 'a possible news editor'.

Thus no motive can be suggested for Elliott's action other than the obvious one: the sackings were an attempt to frighten the Time Out staff into doing what he wanted. He miscalculated badly - - as he seemed to so often during the whole period. For instead of backing down the Time Out chapel collectively seemed to realise for the first time what was going on - and what they could do to change it.

The chapel refused to accept the sackings, refused to work with Boyer, negotiated a wages agreement, which for the first time almost anywhere included freelance rates, and also a procedure for choosing the new editor, a committee of four staff plus Elliott.

Meanwhile 40,000 young Londoners go on finding out where the movies are at. But if Elliott wants to turn them into a million - and Time Out into a daily - by 1984 he's going to need more than a few thousands from Rothschilds.

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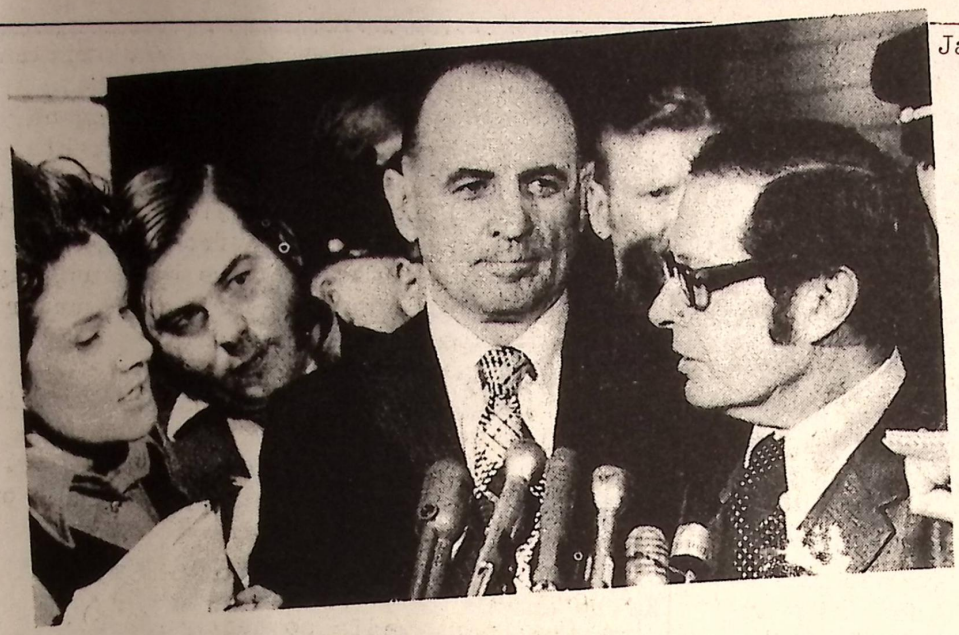


James McCord: double age

Watergate: who's fooling us about what today?

Although some American newspapers have occasionally looked so dangerously like reporting the truth that they've annoyed the Times, that's hardly enough. As these extracts from recent issues of an American alternative paper, the Boston Phoenix, suggest, the established press over there isn't quite what Bernard Levin says it is. The extracts come from a column written by Carl Oglesby who has consistently argued that McCord, the Watergate 'conspirator' who broke ranks and turned on Nixon, was a double agent from the beginning; that he was working for the 'Yankees', the old Atlantic-based Eastern establishment, against the 'Cowboys', the new Southern-based business and industrial power behind Nixon and Johnson.

The double-agent hypothesis enables us to explain a number of odd moments in the way the whole thing has developed and to make sense of the results actually being experienced within the broad political community. Turned inside out, for example, the silly way the Watergate team got busted now becomes McCord's means of arousing suspicions in the normally stupid building guards.

Watergate means that Nixon's party will not be able to govern aggressively, will not be able to deliver on its basic campaign promises, and will not be in shape to contest the presidency in the '76 elections, which therefore will pit Kennedy against a hired loser the likes of Lowell Weicker.

Seeing McCord as a double agent so much enriches the spectacle, gives it such a depth, such an interior, I think it merits being entertained on aesthetic grounds alone.

More, persuasive, probably, is the fact that the standing impression of McCord won't wash. Its deficiencies compel us to speculate. It treats him as a little guy technician who got scared simply of being abandoned to a longish prison term and so decided to sing, to rat on former buddies and in the bargain blow the whole Nixon caboodle out the window and bring down on the whole world what may easily be mounting up to the deepest crisis of American leadership since the Civil War.

On the contrary, from the available facts McCord emerges as a quite fully grown up master spy from the top echelon of the CIA. By itself alone this ought to discourage the view that he broke

discipline for fear of prison. It adds to this to remember that it is from McCord himself that we learned what the 'lengthy prison sentence' meant, namely, a salary of $3000 a month and a believable promise of presidential clemency.

'Plausible denial' is a term from the spybook which Watergate has taught us to know means that if you want to hide what you are doing, you must make it possible for people not to see you doing it.

The straight media must have walked us through this vertiginous concept a dozen times, but I have yet to see them apply the plain implication of it, that plausibility is the stuff of deception, to their current pictures of reality. Since they know on principle and by experience that we get deceived all the time, why do they not ask as a matter of routine scepticism who might be fooling us about what today?

Two recent Watergate developments in particular bring this to mind, one involving the death of Dorothy Hunt and the other the relationship between Fensterwald and McCord.

The 'theory of prosecution' of a private investigator from Chicago, Sherman Skolnick, is that the crash last December at Chicago's Midway airport of United 553 inbound from Washington was the result of foul play. Among the crash victims were Dorothy Hunt, wife of Howard, Michele Clark of CBS, said to be in pursuit of a Watergate angle, and lawyers of a pipeline company, Northern Natural Gas, locked in a vast struggle with the antitrust division of the Justice Department.

Through his agent Alex Bottos, Skolnick claims to know that the crash was the work of one Sarelli gang, which he says was peddling on the underworld market within two days of the crash (a) two million dollars in American Express money orders he says D Hunt was carrying plus (b) the so-called Mitchell documents carried by the gas lawyers, worth five million for their use in blackmailing the administration.

This story has been circulated extensively in the counter press for several months, but until recently the straight press wouldn't touch it. On 26 May the Times ran its first Skolnick story, a basically fair story with a good summary of the pros and cons. Then a week later in a two-part story written from Chicago by Ronald Kessler, the redoubtable Washington Post, acting as usual as though it had author's rights in 'the Watergate story', recognised Sholnick all at once (Kessler's two parts were Saturday and Sunday front page stories), but only the more conclusively to destroy his false theories of murder and sabotage in high places.

Kessler's technique, that of a bad lawyer, is to summarise a Skolnick claim from its weakest side and to leave his more powerful arguments out altogether. He has facts and he bloodies Skolnick on several points of substance; but he doesn't even begin to blow him away.

What can it be? Why are all the liberal news media so defensive out front about Skolnick's ideas? Are they so afraid of another civil war in their world? Or in their conception of the world? So disgusted by the idea of murder of so many uninvolved people that they can't even focus their revulsion and explain whether it comes from their fear of facing a perhaps truly godawful national situation, or from honest and calm belief that Skolnick's charges lack weight?

I say that as far as a normal old-fashioned New Left consciousness like mine can sift what Skolnick is saying, his theory is totally harmonious (a) with the late revelations of Watergate and (b) with the much longer-standing conviction, universal and instinctive within the civil rights, antiwar, and liberation movements, that Nixon's reign is the reign of straight nihilism, his stupid, demoralizing face is that of death in certain nightmares.

Suppose Dorothy Hunt was moving to be free of Creep's madness and safe from its impending collapse and was in flight last December with all its inner secrets. What would 40 more mean to this person if his power were directly threatened? He is bombing Cambodia into a froth without slightest political and only scanty legal basis for doing so at the very moment at which he stands implicitly accused before the nation's highest body of presiding through outright criminal manipulation of the electoral system.

The straight media boast a lot about the job they've done on Watergate. But look closer at the job, say, the Post has done. Their greatest actual activity

may be simply that they provided a free and unquestioned conduit for whoever it was who wanted the Watergate story to emerge.

Not that it shouldn't have emerged, but that there is also some basic curiosity as to (a) the motives of the Post's original and still somewhat shadowy sources and (b) the motives and identities of the secret Creep funding group. This last is the higher question next after 'Did Nixon do it?' because it brings us the task of seeing who told him to, and makes us deal with people who can move mountains and close magazines, like Howard Hughes, for example.

Or take McCord and Fensterwald (his second lawyer). How willing has the Post or the Times been to get into the details of their intriguing relationship? How and when did they actually meet? What did McCord know about Fensterwald before they met?

McCord's first lawyer Alch introduced a tantalizing detail in his statement to the Ervin committee on 23 May. He swore he heard Fensterwald tell McCord that when reporters asked if there was a prior relationship between the two of them, Fensterwald answered that there had been. Alch said this surprised McCord, and that Fensterwald answered, 'Well, after all, you have sent checks to me for the Committee to Investigate Assassinations.'

Maybe it is not strange that McCord should have contributed to the Committee's work of finding out who really killed JFK, an act I find inconsistent with his stance as a right-wing militant in a secret Nixon organisation. Even so, that would make it only all the stranger that we had to wait to find this out through Alch's testimony...

Broadmoor suicides

From now on we hope to include in each issue brief reports on mental hospitals and prisons and the organisations working in these fields. Comments and material for publication welcome.

In INSIDE STORY 7 we published an account of present conditions and malpractices, past and present, in Broadmoor which we said was 'by a person who worked there until recently'. The account included the statements that there had been 17 suicides inside Broadmoor in 1967-8 and that a number of earlier deaths 'were either murder or need some explaining'.

Following the publication of our article the Public Action Committee for Broadmoor quoted it in a statement to the National Association for Mental Health and in a letter to Sir Keith Joseph. In its reply to the PACB the Department of Health and Social Security - after saying that it was 'quite impossible' for Joseph to write back himself - stated that there had been three suicides in 1967-8, not 17.

The letter went on: 'You also referred to the deaths of three patients in the years 1962-1966. In all three cases reports were made to the coroner and all were investigated by this Department. In two cases the police also carried out separate investigations. No reason was found for any action against any person. We do not see any point in re-opening these cases by public enquiry.'

We have failed to obtain any reply to the DHSS letter from our original informant. We also now think that he did not work on the staff at Broadmoor, as he told us, but that he was a patient there. While we do not accept the DHSS reply, with its rejection of a public enquiry, we doubt whether there were in fact as many as 17 suicides in 1967-8.

Meanwhile, in 1973, suicides in Broadmoor continue: in the Observer of 17 June Des Wilson reported on the case of Philip Brew who killed himself on 26 May. This was after waiting 14 months

for the Home Office to decide on doctors' recommendations that he should be transferred from Braodmoor - only to find that the eventual decision was to refer his case to the Parole Board.

The Evening News exclusive on 15 June, which claimed to reveal a mass escape plan by 60 Broadmoor inmates, was also news to the nurses who were said to have foiled it. In fact none of the events so colourfully described - keys found in mattresses and rabbit warrens - took place at all. Even the usually well-informed Dr Unwin was seen wandering round asking people where the story could have come from.

Broadmoor authorities are recommending that a classification of special dangerousness be added to 'psychopath': this already meaningless term simply means a person who 'ought' to get an indefinite sentence - no treatment is possible by definition. 'Special dangerousness ' will presumably amount to newsworthiness, eg sex crimes and mass murder.

As we reported in INSIDE STORY 6 psychiatric patients in general are beginning to fight back. The Mental Patients Union, for all who are or have been mental patients, was formed in March and now has contact addresses in Leeds, Manchester, Surrey and south east London. For information write to 97 Prince of Wales Road, London NW5 or telephone 01-267 2770. There's a weekly meeting on Wednesday at 7.30 pm.

The magazine Humpty Dumpty is devoting its next issue to the detention and treatment of mental patients and wants articles on this subject. Its new address is 35 Hargreave Road, London N19 and copy date is the end of July. Humpty Dumpty holds monthly open meetings in the Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road.

The Working Group on the Internment of Political Dissenters in Mental Hospitals leafleted the Oslo International Congress of Psychotherapy at the end of June. Also a national newspaper has finally followed up our account (INSIDE STORY 6) of the scandalous attitude of the British psychiatric establishment to the treatment of Russian dissenters. However since the story was by the appalling B Levin, whose credibility is severely limited, not much has been gained.

Prison report

Robert Carr's two batches of proposals, designed to contain an increasingly self-conscious and assertive prison population, have had wide publicity. Carr's 'tougher measures' announced on 11 May four days before the annual conference of the Prison Officers Association were obviously a sop to their membership. But those announced a month later were, without doubt, concessions to both the prisoners themselves and to PROP. As well as an end to 'dietary punishment' alias 'Bread and Water' Carr announced numerous other marginal reforms. But, more importantly, he did propose as an 'experiment' to end censorship in certain open prisons and, on prisoners' wages, he stated that it is hoped ultimately to pay outside rates.

PROP has been campaigning on the wages issue: the Guardian reported on 2 June that the National Joint Council for the Building Industry had 'officially recognised training given to prisoners during their sentences'.

Apart from the campaign which South London PROP group have carried on at Brixton Prison as a result of the escape bid on 30 May (see below) attacking censorship and the brutality of police and prison officers, there have been marches and pickets actively campaigning in support of the Stoke Newington Five and the Belfast 10.

Had those prisoners who tried to escape from Brixton realised how important it was for the State to hold the Belfast 10 in captivity it is doubtful if they would have tried an escape bid at such a time. A great deal has to be done to create more awareness and common cause between those making demands on behalf of 'political prisoners' and other like PROP who make demands in favour of all prisoners.

Hilary Creek is now very ill in Holloway with anorexia nervosa: she is vomiting her food and her weight is down to six stone. She has been treated by a psychiatrist since January, but the authorities have so far ignored his

report that her condition can only be cured in an outside hospital with no prospect of a return to prison. Offers of help to the welfare committee for the Stoke Newington Five, 54 Harcombe Road, London N16.

Ex-internee Michael Farrell and Tony Canavan, given eight months and six months respectively for 'organising an illegal demonstration', are now in Crumlin Road Jail. They have been refused the status of political prisoners because their sentences are less than nine months. The effect of this decision is to keep them among loyalist prisoners who have threatened them with violence. The Anti-Internment League is trying to get this decision reversed.

Lord Longford, chairman of Sidgewick and Jackson, having investigated pornography and duly reported on it, to his own satisfaction at least, has now turned his attention to prisons. Longford recently interviewed some people from PROP and told them he wanted to produce an 'objective' book about prisons 'from the prisoners point of view', which would ultimately shock an MP or two in the House into doing something.

Criminals and ex-prisoners do, Longford acknowledges, write books but these are alas 'subjective', eg Brian Stratton's book reviewed in this issue, published by PROP because every publisher approached turned it down.

Incidentally, some of those who work on INSIDE STORY disagree with our rather critical review of the book - and with the dismissal of the play, There's Always Room in the Nick. The General Will, who perform it, say they will put it on for expenses only: get in touch with them at 9 Apsley Villas, Bradford 8: telephone Bradford 42915.

On 6 June PROP members found themselves at another rather unusual meeting. The social worker/youth leader of the Swiss Church Club in London, had asked for a speaker on 'life in prison'. So along went three PROP members one of whom had been inside for a number of years until quite recently.

Unknown to us the youth leader had also approached the Home Office for a speaker, who turned out to be the Assistant Governor of Pentonville, Mr G Iles.

Once Iles knew that the other speakers were from PROP it transpired that he was speaking only for himself and in no way 'officially'. Furthermore, he would only speak at all if it was agreed that PROP itself went unmentioned during the course of the discussion. A peculiar demand to make if he was speaking just for himself. It was all right to read relevant chunks from PROP's 'Prisoners Charter of Rights' and its 'Statement of Intent' but not to identify them as PROP documents.

Asked to suggest ways in which people might find out what actually happens in prisons Iles replied: 'I'm afraid I can't help you on that one. We're covered by the Official Secrets Act.' Iles did add that, for his part, he felt more information ought to be made available but this remark was unconvincing, since he had himself insisted on a blanket of secrecy over what he said at that meeting.

Not that this demand for silence presented any difficulties: it turned out that the conditions Iles demanded were the only things he said of any significance.

Camden Council has also made a concession to PROP by granting the lease of shop-fronted premises at 339a Finchley Road, London, NW6: (01-435 1215). PROP has appealed for £300: contributions will be gratefully received at the new address.

Brixton beatings

For four successive Saturdays after the Brixton Prison escape on 30 May PROP members leafleted the prison, appealing to visitors for information on what had happened. South London PROP is now working on a report which will compare what the media said with the prisoners' side of the story - and highlight the brutal treatment escaping prisoners received when they were recaptured. Below is an eye-witness account by a local resident, followed by extracts from a letter by a prisoner's wife.

'I saw the prisoners run past my house and turn into Chale Road. I saw the prison officers running after them with large pieces of wood. One officer ran up to a man and struck him with the wood - the officer fell down with the force of the blow and the man he struck also fell.

I do not think the man could have been a prisoner because the officer looked at him, left him and ran down Chale Road.

I heard a lot of noise and soon after I saw a man being brought out of Chale Road. I got very upset because the man seemed to have a bad head wound: his head and face were covered in blood. Two officers were supporting him by the arms and a third officer, who looked like a policeman, was walking behind with a guard dog.

Although the prisoner was hurt the officer with the dog kept punching him in the back and neck and trying to get the dog to bite - I did not see the dog bite the prisoner.

A few seconds after, the other prisoners came past. Two others seemed to have head wounds but, apart from the blood, did not seem to be hurt so bad.

My family did not like me writing this letter in case I get involved but the incident worried me and, when I told my friends, they thought I should let you know.

I believe in an officer striking a prisoner back if the prisoner has struck him first, but I do not agree with officers hitting a wounded man.'

'I was glad to see members of PROP outside Brixton Prison Saturday 9 June protesting over the Brixton Prison breakout on 30 May. My husband was involved.

He had his head cut open, his legs beaten - he could hardly walk - and his ribs beaten. He waited six days for an X-ray...

He had a gold St Christopher medal and chain ripped from his neck. An officer who put it in his pocket denies taking it: two officers saw him take it...

Other men involved: one man received 20 stitches in his head - he needed a blood transfusion, he lost so much blood; another was in a coma for six days; another 10 stitches in his face; another stitches in his head - and the officers kept beating his legs as he crouched on the floor. Also two men who weren't involved in any way were beaten unconscious.'

Of course the screws also reacted to the leaflets. One man came back after reading his leaflet and said: 'Listen you cunt, before you write these things you should get your facts straight.' He had been 'one of the poor bastards' involved in stopping the escape. He knew about guns and the soap gun had been pointed at him: it looked real.

He also said that he had broken his stick on one of the escapers.

The postcard below was another response: like the letter from the prisoner's wife quoted above, the card was anonymous. It was addressed to 'THE CLEAVER ONES?'

'STUPID FOOLS LIKE YOU SHOULD BE PUT INSIDE. THEN YOU COULD SEE WHAT THE OFFICERS HAVE TO COPE WITH. IF YOU ARE SO TAKEN UP WITH THE VILLAINS, JOIN UP AND BE A WARDER AND GET YOUR FACTS RIGHT. IT TAKES GUTS.'

It must take a lot of guts to break a stick over a prisoner's body.

Six women interned

As well as 800 men, six young women are now interned by the British in Northern Ireland. Below are some details of their treatment supplied by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.

Liz McKee, 20

During the first week in March Liz, along with two other girl internees, attempted to escape from Armagh Jail. They were within yards of freedom on the outer perimeter wall when they became entangled in the vicious barbed wire surrounding the jail. They were recaptured and Liz suffered a severe beating: her hands were badly bruised from the batoning she received at the hands of the male warders. During that night she was hosed with icy cold water on six different occasions in her own cell where she was put in solitary confinement.

Theresa Holland, 17

When she was arrested on 14 February 1973 the Special Branch police and military personnel interrogating her would not let her wash for several days. The Special Branch took great delight in continually showing her horrific photographs of young boys whose bodies had been horribly mutilated in explosions, implying that she personally was responsible. The only food she was offered was a greasy sandwich with dirty fingermarks on it.

Margaret Shannon, 18

The sham trials that all internees are subjected to are nothing less than concentration camp mock courts. The whole proceedings are held in secret, within the confines of the Long Kesh Concentration Camp, surrounded by barbed wire and armed soldiers.

On 25 April 1973 Margaret was due to appear before these secret proceedings. She arrived in court and was listening to the ludicrous charges being read out against her and being verified by the 'secret witness' who hid behind a screen. Margaret was so incensed that the person had not got the guts to come out and face her to give evidence against her that she ran across to the screen and pulled it down, exposing the secret witness.

She recognised him as a certain army captain who was stationed in her home area and who had threatened to shoot Margaret on the street if he ever saw her. So Margaret, in fighting Irish fashion, leaped upon this giant of a soldier and proceeded to give vent to her feelings by inflicting as much pain on him as possible. She knew she had only a few seconds to do this because immediately two male soldiers jumped on Margaret and dragged her out of the court. She was beaten so badly by the soldiers outside that she was rendered unconscious.

Even the female wardresses who had accompanied Margaret from Armagh were upset at the beating she received from these brave British soldiers that they screamed at them to stop beating her for fear of killing her. Her neck was lacerated and her throat was badly bruised. Her clothing was torn off her including her nylon tights, and she was confined to bed for several days afterwards. Consequently Margaret is refusing to recognise these courts in future and refusing to appear before them.

Ann Walsh, 18

During her period of arrest in August 1972 she was held in Castlereagh Detention Centre where, during interrogation she was subjected to the 'noise treatment': a high pitched whine is directed towards the detained person and it can, if done long enough, permanently damage the mind or the hearing of the person on the receiving end. She was released after a few days in August 1972 and was, until her internment in March attending the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast for treatment on her ears because, during her torture, she had temporarily lost her hearing in one ear.

Ann was also involved in the fracas in the secret courts on 25 April: both Margaret and Ann's cases were due up before the judge the same day. Ann was in a waiting room while Margaret was in the court.

When she heard the rumpus and the sounds of Margaret being beaten by the soldiers, she freed herself from her guards and burst into the court to go to the aid of her comrade. But she got no further than the door, when she was set upon by two burly British army soldiers

who beat her up and beat her head against the wall.

She was bruised in many places, including her ankle which was kicked by the soldiers. When her head was beaten against the wall she temporarily lost her sight for 15 minutes, this was probably either a mental or physical reaction related to her ear trouble. The cases were abandoned and the two girls were returned to Armargh Jail where the prison doctor visited Ann: the treatment he gave her was one single tablet to 'calm her nerves'.

Marie Delaney, 18

During her arrest, on 10 May she was put under intense interrogation by the Special Branch and Military Intelligence who tried to make her sign a statement saying that she was responsible for various shootings and explosions. They said that if she signed they would release her. Marie didn't sign anything - wisely. At no time did the British army or the police give any reason either to Marie or her parents for her arrest and subsequent internment.

Angela Nelson, 17

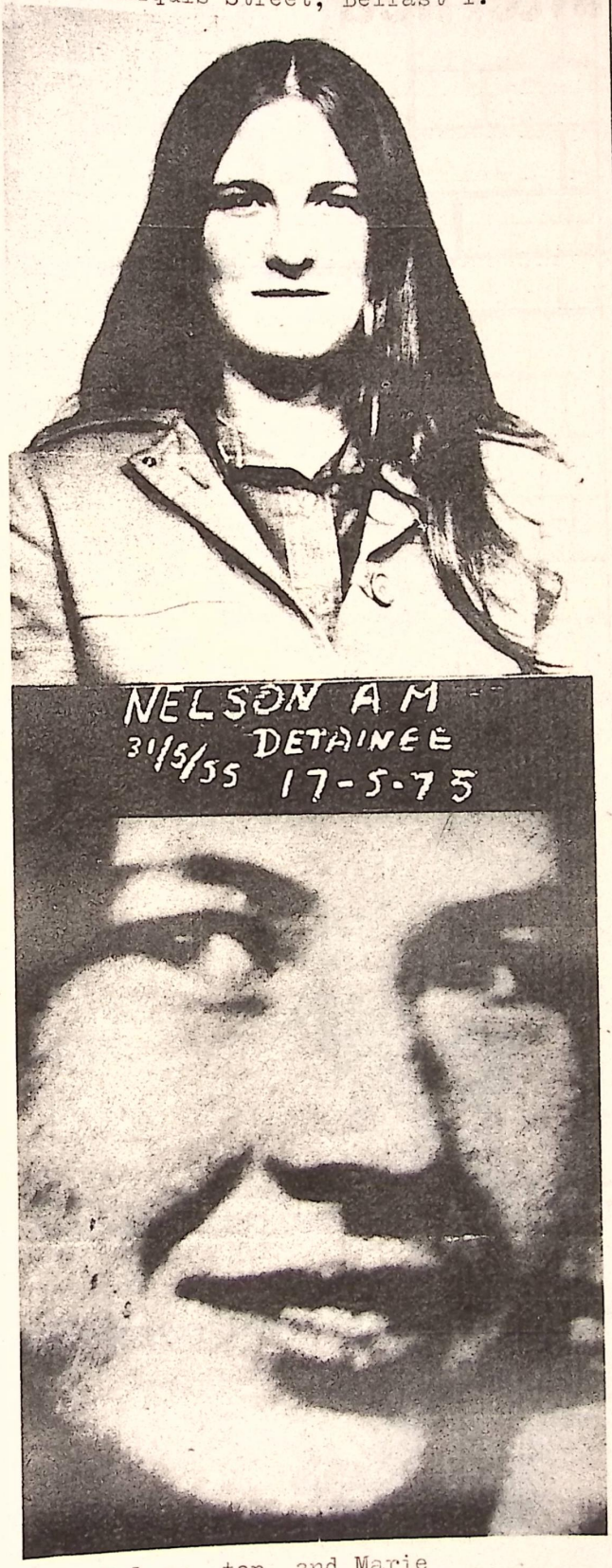
When she was arrested on 17 May, she was staying with a friend who had two children, a baby of 11 months and a little boy 2½ years old. The soldiers on the raiding party tried to trip her friend coming down the stairs with the baby in her arms.

He succeeded when they all - babies included - arrived at the army barracks: he tripped her up when she got out of the Saracen armoured car. While in the house during the raid another soldier pointed his gun at the baby girl in her mother's arms and said 'Do you know what I would like to do? I would like to stick this gun up her fanny and twist it and twist it'.

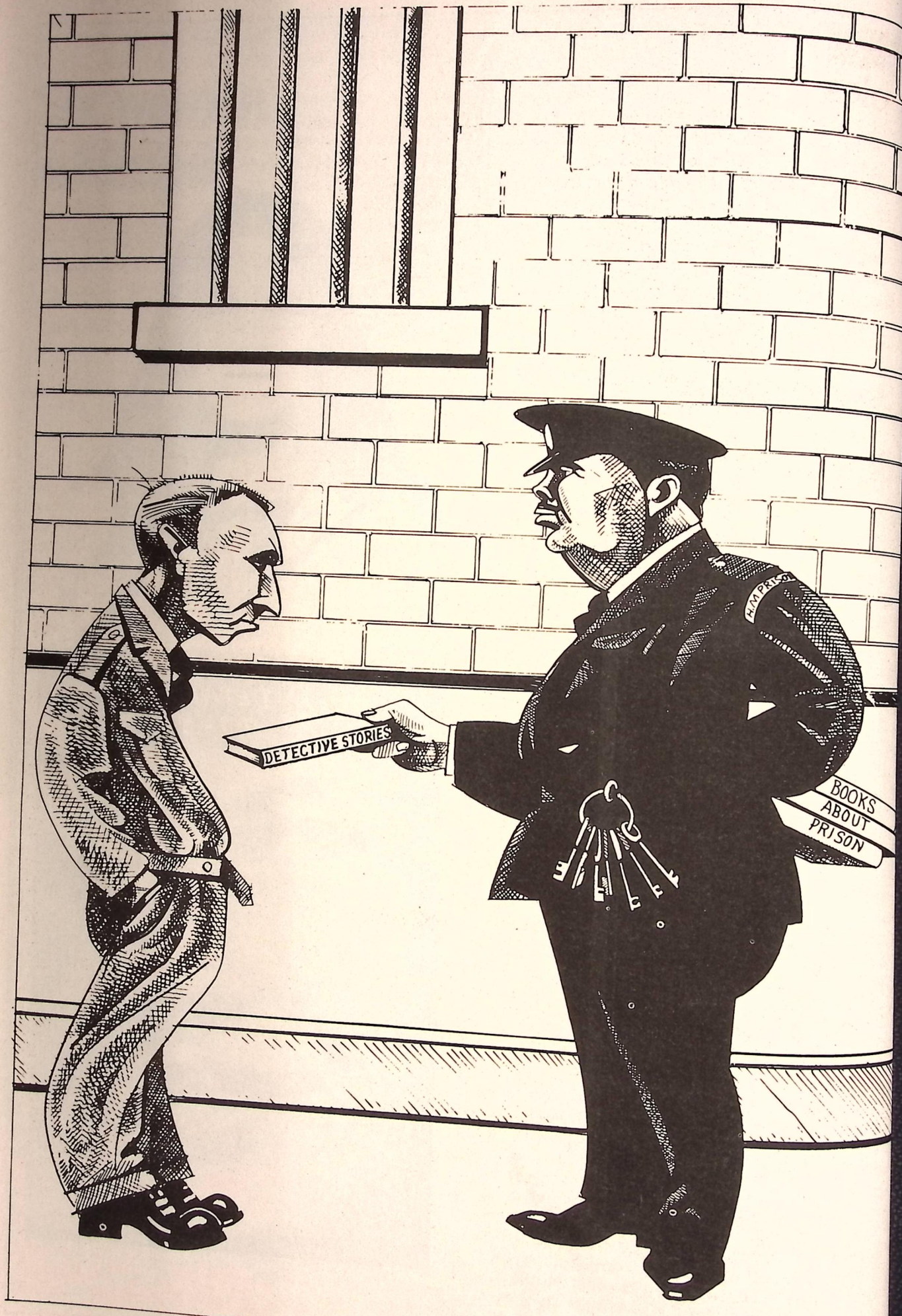
The notorious Detective McKinney interrogated Angela unceasingly and at one time threatened to assault her sexually. He asked Angela would she be willing to appear before an identity parade where a policeman who was shot could identify the person who shot him. Angela protesting her innocence and her abhorrence of violence readily agreed for she had nothing to hide.

Shortly afterwards McKinney brought in a man in civilian clothing and asked him could he identify Angela as the person who shot him. He said that Angela was not the person responsible and as he left the room two Special Branch men said, 'We could have had her on that only he made a mess of it'.

Note: the address of these six women is Armagh Prison, Armagh, Co Armagh, Northen Ireland or c/o Madge Davison, NICRA, 2 Marquis Street, Belfast 1.



Angela Nelson, top, and Marie Delaney


DETECTIVE STORIES
H.M. PRISON
BOOKS ABOUT PRISON

books

In this issue we are taking more space than usual to review two pairs of contrasting books on two contrasting topics - the practice of prison in this country and the theory of anarchism in this country - because we believe that both the topics and the books are mutually illuminating. Both reviews are by Nicolas Walter.

The crime of punishment

Psychological Survival by Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor (Penguin Books, 1972, paperback 45p) and Who Guards the Guards? by Brian Stratton (North London PROP, £1).

Certain aspects of a society are particularly relevant to the way it really works, but they are also particularly difficult to describe. This is especially true of the closed institutions in a society - monasteries, barracks, mental hospitals, boarding schools, penal colonies, labour camps and prisons.

Prison is perhaps the most elusive institution of all, because its essential characteristic - compulsory confinement over a period of time - is almost impossible to convey. Attempts to depict prison in drama, whether as literature - such as Brendan Behan's The Quare Fellow (1956) - or as documentary - such as Jonathan Marshall's How to Survive in the Nick (recently performed at the Bush Theatre in London) - are doomed to failure, because the dramatic content of prison life is its most untypical aspect, and because the point of theatre, cinema and television is freedom and immediacy, action and brevity - all of which are by definition absent in prison.

The visual image of prison is given far more effectively than in any play or film by Gustave Dore's engraving of the exercise yard at Newgate a hundred years ago. The only way to see prison properly is to be a prisoner; the only way to describe it at all is in books, which are close enough and long enough to convey something of its essence.

Many prison books have appeared in this country, most bad but some good. There are books by professional administrators and establishment journalists, which give the official line. The authors' opinions may be simplistic nonsense, but their conscious assembly of facts and half-conscious expression of attitudes are often useful.

The best book of this kind is Lionel Fox's The English Prison and Borstal System (1952), which is out of date and out of print but is a monument beside which such sequels as Michael Wolff's Prison (1967) are merely shadows. Fox's great service was to put in writing for the general public what the people who run the prison system think they are doing.

There are books by professional academics and more conscientious journalists, which give a so-called 'scientific' view of the sociology of deviance or the psychology of small groups or whatever area of study is currently fashionable. They are not always so far from the official books as their authors suppose, and their value is in inverse proportion to the amount of theory they offer.

The best book of this kind is Terence and Pauline Morris's Pentonville (1963), which is a remarkable combination of objective description leading to subjective despair; but Tony Parker has produced a whole series of anti-academic documentary studies of prisoners and other victims of society which rise above all the academic work on the subject.

There are books by professional reformers, which give a liberal line. They too are not always so far from the official line as their authors think, and indeed the prison reform tradition may be seen as a kind of loyal opposition to the orthodox punitive tradition.

The best books of this kind are Hugh Klare's Anatomy of Prison (1960) and Merfyn Turner's A Pretty Sort of Prison (1964), which are revealing accounts by well-known reformers - revealing not only of prison conditions but also of the weakness of liberalism unable to see that prison reform is in the end a self-contradiction.

There are books by political prisoners, which gain from being by people who have

actually experienced imprisonment, but which lose from being by untypical prisoners. Even they are not always so far from the official line as their authors think, and the radical reform tradition may be seen as a left-wing opposition to both the orthodox punishers and the orthodox reformers.

The best book of this kind is still the compilation by Stephen Hobhouse and Fenner Brockway, English Prisons Today (1922), based on the experiences of the First World War conscientious objectors; but there are also Mark Benney's Gaol Delivery (1948), based on the experiences of their Second World War successors, and later the Prison Reform Council pamphlet Inside Story (1962), based this time on the experiences of the nuclear disarmers.

Finally there are books by ordinary prisoners - though it is of course extraordinary if a prisoner writes a book, and also extraordinary if it gets published. There is the special genre of prison writing which rises above mere autobiographical narrative to the level of true literature. The great exemplar is Dostoyevski's Notes from the Dead House (1862), and the best twentieth-century examples of Victor Serge's Men in Prison (1930) and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich (1962).

Perhaps the finest example from Britain is Jim Phelan's double exposure of the novel Lifer (1938) and the memoir Jail Journey (1940), both drawn from his experience of 15 years inside. Brendan Behan's Borstal Boy (1958) and Frank Norman's Bang to Rights (1958) are worthy recent attempts which fall short of this standard. But much more common is the straightforward account of prison, of which dozens have been published during this century, two good recent ones being Peter Wildeblood's Against the Law (1955) and Zen's Life (1968).

The two books under consideration here are respectively an academic and a personal account of prison during the 1960s, both being interesting additions to the literature.

Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor are two young sociologists who have specialised in the study of deviance. In 1967 they began giving classes in social science to the long-term prisoners in the security wing at Durha and in 1968 they began a 'collaborative research project' with the prisoners themselves on the effects of long-term imprisonment; this was supplemented by more orthodox research on another group in another prison.

Typically, the Home Office refused permission for the project to be done, but by the time the official mind was made up the work was finished.

Psychological survival is intended to b 'a phenomenonological picture of life' for long-term prisoners in Britain toda

This picture is shown in several frames - that of 'survival in extreme conditions' of physical or psychological deprivation, that of 'the closed emotional world' of a confined community that of the deterioration caused by the passage of time, that of the conflicting claims of authority and solidarity, that of the various forms of resistance and that of a typology of personality and ideology.

This typology, incidentally, contains an account of what Cohen and Taylor call 'the ideology of romantic anarchism', which is connected with the personality of 'the confrontational criminal', is characterised by a 'distinctive blend of recklessness, anti-authoritarianism and egoism' and is related both to the anarchist terrorists and bandits in France before the First World War and to the Bonnie-and-Clyde bandits in America after it.

There is a passing reference to 'the ideas behind romantic anarchism', but no indication that these have been understood; it is clear that the attitude described by Cohen and Taylor is directed not against authority as such but against society in general and is in fact not so much anarchist as nihilist.

There is also a query whether the 'romantic anarchist' ideology 'works' in prison, but no question whether it may perhaps be true of prison. If a long-term prisoner who is a 'confrontational criminal' believes that society is against him, he surely has pretty good grounds for his belief! Here Cohen and Taylor should have given more thought to the political rather than the sociological aspect of their work.

There is no doubt that Psychological Survival is better than most academic

books in prison. But it shows once more that, just as Jeremy Bentham called the idea of natural rights 'nonsense upon stilts', the social sciences may be called commonsense upon stilts. Cohen and Taylor take 70,000 words to say what should be obvious in seven - that a long prison sentence is inhuman; and that it destroys the humanity of both the prisoner and the jailer.

This foregone conclusion is accompanied by some useful factual description and supplemented by some useless theoretical discussion. Cohen and Taylor, influenced by current trends in radical sociology, take care to avoid both moral condemnation and intellectual patronage of the prisoners who were their pupils, their subjects, and their friends; but, however close the relationship between the two sides, and however strong the prisoners' own contribution to the study of themselves, it is impossible to accept the authors' version of the situation.

Cohen and Taylor say: 'The subjects of our research had the habit of becoming researchers in their own right, so that at times we have been uncertain of the distinction between observer and observed... We have felt ourselves to be doing no more than gazing at our own images in mirrors held up by our intended subjects.'

The fact remains that observer and observed are quite distinct; that the prisoners - even though they collaborate in the research - are prisoners, and the sociologists - even though they reject the pretence of value-free observation - are sociologists; and that they are gazing not at themselves but at someone else - just as we are.

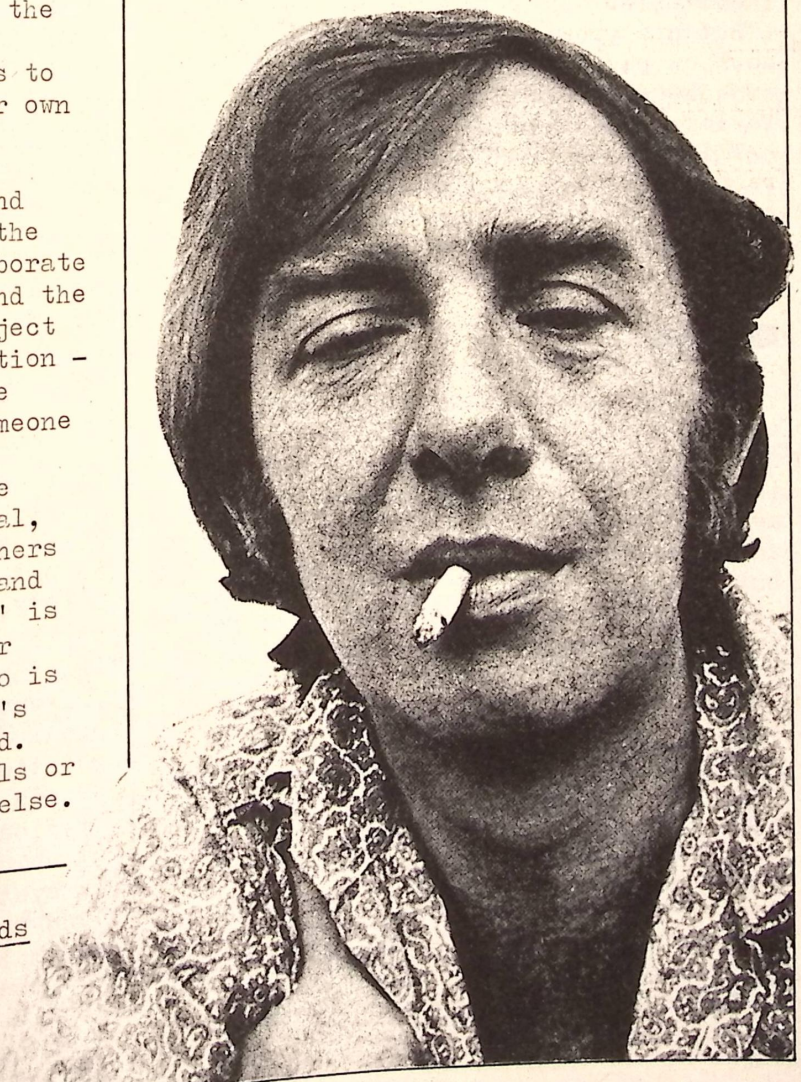
This problem is part of the whole discussion about deviants in general, criminals in particular, and prisoners above all. Stripped of emotional and normative associations, a 'deviant' is someone who is different from other people, a 'criminal' is someone who is different by breaking other people's rules and being caught and punished. Discussion about deviants, criminals or prisoners is always about someone else.

Brian Stratton, author of Who Guards the Guards? The book is due to appear by August: copies £1 from North London PROP, 339a Finchley Road, NW6.

The main virtue of Who Guards the Guards? is that it is not by someone else. Brian Stratton served a nine-year sentence for armed robbery from 1962 to 1969, mostly in Parkhurst. He wrote his book three years ago and long extracts appeared in Ink two years ago (Nos 11 and 12). It was rejected by every commercial publisher it was offered to (see INSIDE STORY 7), and it has in the end been published by the North London branch of Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners (PROP).

One can see the publishers' problem. It is a bad book, taken narrowly as a book, even though Stratton was given some help by Jonathan Sale, who is a competent journalist. It is constructed as a series of disconnected reflections rather than as a continuous narrative and it is expressed in terms of pure cliche from beginning to end.

It has also been written in almost complete ignorance of the great body of prison history and literature. Stratton believes that 'next to nothing' has been written about British prisons recently, when a full bibliography would make a



book on its own. He believes that the Parkhurst riot of October 1969 was the worst ever, when there are still survivors of the great Dartmoor mutiny of January 1932.

Most unfortunate of all, he is unaware of the many previous accounts of Parkhurst, such as Wilfred Macartney's Walls Have Mouths (1936). It would be fascinating to have a comparative analysis of one notorious prison over half a century: examination of the available sources, including Tony Blyth's account (see INSIDE STORY 7-9), suggests that conditions have if anything got worse rather than better.

Nevertheless Who Guards the Guards? is a valuable contribution to prison writing, partly in documenting the troubles at Parkhurst under the governship of Alastair Miller, from the sit-down of September 1966, when Stratton nearly lost the sight of an eye in the screws' reprisals, to just before the big riot of October 1969, when Stratton unsuccessfully tried for four months after his release to warn MPs and journalists that serious trouble was inevitable.

But his greater contribution is to put down on paper the authentic voice of the conscious prisoner - what Cohen and Taylor would call the 'confrontational criminal'. It is a voice which will be recognised by anyone who has been in prison and which should be listened to by anyone who is interested in prison.

Stratton is rude and rough, embittered and outspoken, unreliable and uncompromising. He is no more interested in trying to understand screws than the average screw is interested in trying to understand prisoners. He has nothing but scorn for most of the administrators of the prison system, and he calls for a purge of the Prison Department of the Home Office.

In the end, though, he has no idea what to do about the system. Like nearly all prisoners, he seems to believe that some offenders should be in prison - like the Durham long-termers, he shares the general hatred of 'sex cases'. In spite of his experience, he cannot get beyond the question of his title.

There is no doubt that Who Guards the Guards? is better than most personal books on prison, but it is limited by being concerned with abuses of the system rather than with the system itself, and it concludes by arguing vaguely for a changing of the guards.

Psychological Survival similarly concludes by arguing hopelessly for some kind of reform of an intolerable aspect of the system. Neither the former prisoner nor the radical sociologists seem to see that it is the system that is intolerable, and that it consists of abuses.

The ambiguity in these two prison books is matched by an ambiguity in the whole prison reform movement. The old Howard League for Penal Reform has long been so establishmentarian that several other bodies have been set up outside official circles to press for immediate concrete improvements.

Thus the conscientious objectors and nuclear disarmers used to work in various ad hoc bodies, of which the latest was the Prison Reform Council. In 1970 this was replaced by Radical Alternatives to Prison, which for the first time has begun by going beyond mere reform and campaigning not so much for amelioration as for abolition - see its pamphlet The Case for Radical Alternatives to Prison (first and second editions 1971, third edition in preparation).

But even RAP is still largely an organisation of people involved in social work and the social sciences who are worried about other people labelled as deviant and needing treatment of some kind, and it is caught in the circle of trying to make its demands sound reasonable to yet other people who are not reasonable.

On the other hand, PROP, which replaced the National Organisation for the Defence of Prisoners and Dependants in 1972, is largely an organisation of people who have been in prison and are fighting for their comrades. But its 'Prisoners' Charter of Rights' is an appeal for amelioration rather than abolition - a series of transitional demands which would certainly amount to a radical reform of the prison system but which still accepts the existence of the system, and which again is made to sound reasonable to people who are not reasonable.

So the basic problem remains - how to describe what prison really is and how to do something about it. But this problem is so basic that it will never

be solved until criminology is turned upside down and penology is turned inside out, until the subjects of research are not the so-called deviants but the so-called normal people who hurt the deviants. This line of research was pursued to some extent by Alex Comfort in Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State (1950), recently reprinted in a paperback edition, but it could be taken a lot further. In the end the real issue is not the punishment of crime but the crime of punishment.

The anarchists speak

The Floodgates of Anarchy by Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer (Kahn and Averill/Stanmore Press, 1970, £1.25, Sphere Books, 1972, paperback 35p) and Anarchy in Action by Colin Ward (Allen and Unwin, 1973, £3.50, paperback £1.75).

Of the many books on anarchism recently published in Britain, very few have been written by British anarchists. But this situation is beginning to change, and here are two books by British anarchists - though that is almost all they have in common. They are an interesting pair because they contain such different accounts of what their titles suggest to be more or less the same subject.

Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer are the main figures in the group which reformed the Anarchist Black Cross in 1968 as a relief organisation for political prisoners, especially anarchists and especially in Spain - where Christie had just spent three years of a 20-year prison sentence for smuggling explosives from France. He had previously been active in the Young Socialists, the Scottish Committee of 100, the Glasgow anarchists and the Syndicalist Workers Federation.

Meltzer is a veteran militant of an earlier generation, who was involved in work for the anarcho-syndicalists in the Spanish Civil War and in the resistance movement in the British army during the Second World War, who has quarrelled with almost every anarchist individual and group in the country and who was best known for publishing a rather eccentric series of historical pamphlets.

Their virtues are their deep personal commitment to libertarian activity and their wide contacts in the international anarchist movement. Their vices are their uncertainty about what they want to say and their inability to say it clearly. As militants the virtues may be stronger than the vices. As writers the vices are overwhelming.

They produced an irregular Bulletin of the Anarchist Black Cross, which became Black Flag in January 1971. This began by concentrating on the problems of relief work but increasingly turned its attention to British politics, especially during the police harassment of Christie and his eventual arrest in connection with the Angry Brigade case in August 1971 (see INSIDE STORY 7).

Christie was named as the editor of the paper, but the evidence suggests that even before his arrest it was largely produced by Meltzer. The version of anarchism it has presented over the past five years emphasises revolution, class struggle and violence, and employs rather hysterical abuse of liberals, pacifists and intellectuals. Its most characteristic features are a sectarian attitude to all other anarchist groups in the country and an obsessive interest in the press (due perhaps to the fact that Meltzer works on a national newspaper).

The version of anarchism presented by The Floodgates of Anarchy is much more respectable and theoretical, but much less readable and interesting. The book is in fact so badly written that it would hardly have been accepted by commercial publishers if it hadn't been for Christie's notoriety following his arrests in Spain in 1964 and then in Britain in 1971, but again the evidence suggests that it was largely written by Meltzer.

There is the usual mixture of minute particularisation and sweeping generalisation, the hectoring tone of voice and the hysterical abuse, the contempt for almost all other anarchists. The preface states that 'the Anarchist movement owes little to the writings of the "intellectual"', that 'we had few, if any, books to consult', that 'little has been written on anarchism in relation to the class struggle', and that 'the

present book is one of the few contemporary writings on what anarchists think, as distinct from academic interpretations as to what they ought to think'.

The last is a good point, at least, in view of the books by George Woodcock, James Joll, April Carter, Roderick Kedward and so on. It would be interesting to know what anarchists at large think about this book, but it has scarcely been mentioned in the anarchist press; references in conversation are mostly uninterested or unfavourable.

When it has not been ignored in print it has been treated in a curious way. Marxists in particular have responded by patronisingly praising the authors, rather as if they were women or blacks, presumably because they are working-class, but possibly because this is what Marxists want anarchism to be.

The few reviews which have appeared have suggested either that the book is very good, or else that it should be excused for not being very good. Neither view is true. The book is very bad, and there is no excuse.

The original publishers specialise in children's books and the occult, and The Floodgates of Anarchy may be seen as belonging to both categories: it is a mixture of the elementary and the mysterious. To begin with, the melodramatic title doesn't really mean anything. Then the brief text covers - or rather, mentions - such things as the state, the church, the class system, the class struggle, the labour movement, political parties, education, organisation, liberty, equality, reform, revolution, sectarianism, unity, violence, terrorism, the youth movement, the 'underground' and so on; but it never attempts a proper analysis or even a clear description, offering instead a series of vague ideas which are accompanied by confused factual assertions rather than supported by proper factual data.

The effect is one of breathlessness, relieved by occasional epigrams which have some wit and force. Meltzer is fond of catching people out in factual error - reasonably enough - but here he can himself be caught out over and over again as he confidently but ignorantly dashes from fact to fact like an intellectual butterfly. It is easy to sneer at bees, but they do get the honey.

The trouble is that buried in the pile of unverified and often unargued statements there are some stimulating points - about the original petite-bourgeoisie, or the role of political parties during a revolution, or the pseudo-revolution of the middle-class youth, or the contradictions of 'anarchist Marxism'.

Above all Christie and Meltzer fail to clarify their particular position in the anarchist movement. The discussions of revolution, class and violence evade the practical issues of what we should think and do in the present situation. Black Flag has from time to time advocated the simplistic slogan, 'Form Fives', meaning industrial cells on the early nineteenth-century model, but The Floodgates of Anarchy is never so specific. Black Flag has more or less supported political terrorism and urban guerrilla war, but The Floodgates of Anarchy, after attacking both the violence of the state and the non-violence of the pacifists, fails to make clear what the role of violence in the social struggle really is.

Perhaps the anarchist movement has been right to ignore the book. Perhaps it would be kinder to forget that it had been written. It is certainly not nearly as useful as an introduction to anarchism as, say, Daniel Guerin's Anarchism or Murray Bookchin's Post-Scarcity Anarchism (see INSIDE STORY 6).

It would certainly be much more interesting if Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer would publish personal accounts of their practical activity in the anarchist movement rather than their theoretical thoughts about anarcho-syndicalism or council communism or whatever it is that they believe in.

Colin Ward has been active in the anarchist movement since the Second World War, being an editor of Freedom from 1947 to 1961 and then the first editor of Anarchy from 1961 to 1970. He has produced an enormous amount of serious journalism during this period, but more recently he has embarked on a considerable programme of writing and editing books, of which Anarchy in Action is the first to appear.

The book is dedicated to Paul Goodman, the American anarchist writer who died a year ago, and the other main source of inspiration is Peter Kropotkin; it is not surprising that Ward's next two books are a symposium on creative vandalism, a paradoxical phenomenon that would have delighted Goodman, and a revised version of Fields, Factories and Workshops, the chief non-revolutionary text by Kropotkin.

Anarchy in Action belongs firmly to the tradition of what may be called pragmatic anarchism. Ward's virtues are that he shows how anarchy can work when it is tried, and that he does so very clearly. His vices are that too much of his argument is quoted from other people when he could have said it as well or better himself, and that he never really comes to grips with the problem of why anarchy is tried so seldom.

Between a short preface and a short bibliography there are 14 chapters on various aspects of libertarian action, two of which have appeared in [illegible] collections of libertarian wri[illegible] The Case for Participatory Dem[illegible] edited by C George Benello and Dimitrios Roussopoulos (1971), and Education Without Schools, edited by Peter Buckman (1973) - and all of which might well have appeared as articles in Anarchy during the 10 years when Ward made it the main forum of libertarian thought in the country. Indeed, the whole book is full of ideas he has been expounding in the anarchist press for 30 years; what is new is that they are now being expounded in a more permanent form to a larger audience.

[redacted]

The chapters cover the state, order, leadership, authority, federalism, planning, housing, the family, school, play, work, welfare, deviance and the future. The technique is the familiar one of mustering a wide range of evidence - as often as not taken from non-anarchist sources - to show that anarchy is not some kind of utopian fantasy but a thoroughly practical proposition which has in fact been put into effect over and over again.

Over and over again he argues that the most suitable method and structure for the solution of social problems are direct action and 'topless federations' - community resistance to outside planning, shanty-towns and squatting against homelessness, student sit-ins inside and free foundations outside the educational system, adventure playgrounds in urban wastelands, work-ins inside and community workshops outside industry, claimants' unions inside and mutual aid outside the welfare system and communal rather than institutional forms of social control of deviants who threaten society.

[redacted]

This is good so far as it goes, but too often it doesn't go far enough. Thus the chapter on housing concentrates on self-hel in extreme situations rather than the wider problems of shelter and land; the chapter on the family covers sex and children, but doesn't consider the problem of women (or rather, men); the chapter on school is in fact about de-schooling rather than free schooling, getting out of rather than taking over the educational system; the chapter on play concentrates on children's play rather than the wider problems of leisure and pleasure; the chapter on work concentrates on the psychological rather than the social aspects, under-playing the factors of class, sex, age and prestige, and considering workers' control of particular jobs rather than of the general system of production 'incidentally, like so many writers on the subject, Ward tends to forget agriculture and consumption).

These are problems of emphasis. More seriously, Ward fails to take proper account of some of the problems which Christie and Meltzer raise, even if they don't settle them - violence, revolution, war, religion - and a large section of the libertarian movement will feel that Anarchy in Action suffers above all from rejecting a class analysis of society.

But the chief defect of the book is really that it is too short. Christie and Meltzer seem to have difficulty in stretching their material to book length; Ward has difficulty in squeezing his into the space. It looks as if his publishers forced him to keep to a limit of 60,000 words, which is the equivalent of only four issues of the old Anarchy; it also looks as if they have altered his title, since the preface suggests that his subject is not so much anarchy in action as 'anarchy as organisation' -

a much more subtle theme. Whatever happened between conception and publication, Ward obviously needs much more room to explain his ideas, and it is to be hoped that he will get it as his programme proceeds.

Nevertheless, this is the most useful text of non-revolutionary anarchism in book form which has been produced in this country in this century. It lacks the force of Guerin's Anarchism and the fire of Bookchin's Post-Scarcity Anarchism, but it is full of facts and thoughts which should be brought to the attention of all those people who say that anarchy is a beautiful idea but how could it work.

It would be an exaggeration to say that these two books follow the two class approaches to anarchism, but there is some truth in seeing The Floodgates of Anarchy as representing a working-class approach and Anarchy in Action as representing a middle-class approach. There is more truth, however, in seeing both books as partial accounts of the subject, one concentrating on struggles and the other on solutions, neither quite confronting the basic problem of how to turn struggles into solutions. But Colin Ward's attempt is more carefully thought out and more convincingly worked up, and it seems more likely to be followed by further attempts which will be worth reading. At least there are some books on anarchism by British anarchists at last.

[redacted]

pamphlets

Take Over the City (Rising Free - 20p), a 36-page printed account of the intensifying community struggle in Italy (and among Italian workers elsewhere in Europe) since 1969, based on material published in Lotta Continua. It may be seen as a sequel to Big Flame's 1971 pamphlet Italy 1969-1970, documenting the spread of the struggle from industry into such areas as prices, health, schools, nurseries, prisons, transport, and above all housing, and the involvement of whole communities in militant direct action, especially mass squatting and rent strikes. A fascinating collection.

Today This House - Tomorrow the City (Islington Housing Research Action Group - 5p), a 12-page printed account by Tjebbevan Tijen and Steve Davidson of the struggle by residents and squatters in the Nieuwmarkt district of old Amsterdam against 'redevelopment' by the planners.

Squatters' Handbook (Islington Squatters - 10p), a 24-page duplicated account of the practical problems of squatting. The best single guide yet.

Marked for Life (A Powell, Institute of Classical Studies, London - 15p), a 32-page printed 'criticism of assessment at universities by A Powell and B Butterworth, attacking all kinds of examination and grading on logical, psychological and sociological grounds, with some 'anarchistic' recommendations for alternatives.

Watergate (Alternative News Service - 20p), a 34-page duplicated digest by Philip West of 'the entire espionage/sabotage/elimination campaign mounted during the 1972 election, and the subsequent cover-up', being the most convenient single account of the affair as far as May 1973.

Lessons of the General Strike 1926 (Militant, Liverpool - 10p), a 24-page printed analysis by Bob Dent of the parts played in 1926 by the government, the Labour Party and trade union leadership, the Communist Party, and the rank and file, with a revolutionary syndicalist moral for 1973.

Street Research Bulletin 3 (Street Research - 15p), a 40-page offset collection in this useful series of items giving facts and ideas for do-it-yourself research, in this case mainly about law, local government and housing.

A Guide to the Poulson Case (Private Eye - 10p), a 16-page offset summary by Martin Tomkinson of the story up to June - that is, just before Poulson's arrest. Not much new for regular readers of Private Eye, but a convenient collection of information about how it does happen here.

Socialist Education and the University a 36-page offset special issue of the Sussex University paper Focus, prepared by members of the Radical Faculty Action Group, giving a critique of the university, and incidentally providing the background to the Huntington affair which occurred after publication. The arguments are familiar and the style is ponderous, but the result is a useful contribution to the debate about higher education.

British Leyland: The Beginning of the End? (Counter Information Services - 60p), a 57-page 'Anti-Report' not only

on the largest British car-manufacturing company but also on the social consequences of car-manufacture and use in general. One of the most devastating of the five 'Anti-Reports', as well researched, written, and produced as ever, and perhaps more generally interesting than all its predecessors.

The Tyranny of Structurelessness (Leeds ORA Women's Group - 5p), a duplicated reprint of a pamphlet from the American women's liberation movement, containing the important message that merely avoiding formal procedures does not achieve a libertarian solution. Required reading far beyond the women's or any other movement - though it is worth remembering that the tyranny of structure is just as dangerous and much more prevalent.

notes

First libel threat

Just before going to press we received the following letter which we are publishing in accordance with our policy of giving critical readers the right to reply.

Dear Sirs
The Medical Protection Society Limited
Re: Dr M C Stevenson - re HM Prison Holloway

We are the solicitors to the above Society, of which Dr Margaret Carmeno Stevenson is a member. She is the Acting Senior Medical Officer at HM Prison, Holloway, and we have been instructed to write to you about the article 'Holloway' in the January/February issue of INSIDE STORY.

This article contained a number of untrue statements which we contend were made maliciously and are defamatory of Dr Stevenson and her fellow doctors. The article presents a gross misrepresentation of the medical facilities at Holloway Prison. In particular the passage 'we should have proper medical staff who are not rejects from hospitals that no outside hospital would have' is a baseless statement and all doctors engaged at the prison are fully qualified medical practitioners. Although we have referred specifically to only this one passage, we reserve the right to rely on other passages in the article in any proceedings.

We are surprised that before publishing such an article you failed to give the doctors impliedly mentioned the normal journalistic courtesy of giving their own views. Since you did not carry out even this step we infer that you had no wish to present a balanced account and that your intention was to discredit the prison medical staff.

We are instructed to issue proceedings against you for damages for libel unless within seven days from the date of this letter you agree to:

(a) publish an apology and withdrawal of the article in your next issue as follows:
'We (author, editor) and Alternative Publishing Co Ltd, wish to express our apologies and regret to Dr Margaret Carmeno Stevenson and her fellow medical staff at Holloway Prison for printing an article in the January/February 1973 issue of the magazine INSIDE STORY, which presented a distorted and untrue picture of the medical facilities at the Prison. We unreservedly withdraw the article.'

(b) publish a counter-statement now being prepared by us giving an accurate factual account of the medical facilities at the Prison.

(c) pay our costs of handling this case, amounting to £50.

Will you please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours faithfully
LE BRASSEUR & OAKLEY
71 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3BZ

We have written to Le Brasseur & Oakley offering to publish a 'counter-statement' of about the same length as the original article.

Our problems...

We have had various other difficulties in the last few months. Our bookshop at 81 Stonhouse Street, SW4 is now closed as a result of arbitrary action by Lambeth Council.

The house, which is scheduled for redevelopment, was made available last autumn by the council to the Clapham Action Group. It was used by several groups, including South London PROP, for meetings and by ourselves as a bookshop.

Then suddenly - without a word of

warning - the locks on the house were changed and the electricity was cut off. Attempts to find out why and regain use of the house have so far failed. Conspiracy theorists will doubtless have their own ideas about the reason for the council's action.

Also, as regular readers will know, we have had to change our printers from Darwin Press to SW Litho. In mid-February - only a few days before we were due to deliver the artwork for INSIDE STORY 8 - we were informed by Darwin Press that they refused to print the magazine any more.

The reasons they gave - in a telephone conversation - were: that they were moving premises in six weeks' time; that they were very busy with other work and that they weren't making enough money out of printing INSIDE STORY.

Later, in a letter to our solicitors, Darwin Press gave other reasons for refusing to print INSIDE STORY, complaining that it was no longer a monthly and saying: 'We do not accept orders for bi-monthly journals.' A curious complaint since the magazine was clearly a bi-monthly by the summer of 1972 - and we said so in No 6 (November).

But Darwin's most interesting reason was clearly implied by the sentence: 'We also considered this publicity a risk to ourselves and have the right to refuse to print same.' Did somebody, we wonder, warn Darwin off printing INSIDE STORY after No 7, the prison issue?

The effects of Darwin's action were that No 8 came out very late in March, the artwork - prepared for Darwin - was in the wrong proportion for SW Litho's standard printing size - hence the distortion - and of course we lost money.

But we are still publishing. Prospective subscribers can be assured that, even if our problems turn into disasters, we will continue to bring out a bi-monthly magazine. If, for financial reasons, we could no longer have INSIDE STORY printed, we would duplicate it. But that doesn't look like happening.

We have, though, once again changed the date on the magazine: from 'July/August' to 'August'. Our intention is to guarantee that the magazine is actually on sale in the shops for the whole of that month, though it will appear in July. The next issue, similarly, will be dated 'October' though it will appear during September.

...and theirs

Elsewhere, of course, alternative media have been in financial trouble recently. Oz and Quest have gone (apologies to any INSIDE STORY reader who subscribed to Quest after seeing their insert: we didn't know either that they were near collapse); Spare Rib have appealed to Women in Media saying: 'If we could raise £5000 via subs our debt to the printer would be paid'; and Black Box, the Glasgow news service, have had their telephone cut off.

Black Box have a number of outstanding bills but perhaps their biggest problem is that the underground press they set out to service more than three years ago has all but disappeared: the various local papers, like Mole Express and Liverpool Free Press, clearly don't depend on a news service based in another city, while IT is the only national underground paper left.

So Black Box is unlikely to resume production of regular news packets, although short items of Scottish news will be sent out from time to time and the service is still available on commission. Alan Sinclair, one of the founders of Black Box, is now based in London. He will be writing for INSIDE STORY as well as doing other feature work. The Black Box office (15 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 6AB), which now includes a bookshop, remains open.

Meanwhile the People's News Service continue to produce an excellent weekly bulletin. They now have nearly 200 subscribers and look like lasting for a long time. They have recently added longer features, 'documents', to their short news items.

Both PNS and Peace News printed in full the recent statement of the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Group. The New Statesman printed most of it - but left out this subversive and dangerous sentence: 'Soldiers will be asked to consider refusing postings to Northern Ireland, staging sit-downs and demonstrations in barracks and, in the final resort, deserting.' You can't get more cautious than that: asked to consider in the final resort. Soldiers - or other people - who want more information should write to BRITWIG, c/o 3 Caledonian Road, London N1.

letters

Sensation

Dear INSIDE STORY

Congratulations on your very worthwhile publication, for which I enclose a life subscription. (Mind you keep going long enough to give me my money's worth!)

Having a personal interest in the Spies for Peace caused me to buy your issues 8 and 9, and your two-part write-up included several details I had not known before. Perhaps the author would consider expanding it into a book, with additional material culled from the memories of hundreds of people, such as those who reprinted the original document and were otherwise involved in the aftermath of the story.

Also, one detail that I have not seen mentioned anywhere, is the pretence of the police that they were ready to make arrests. I well remember hearing a radio news bulletin that arrests were expected to be made within 24 hours. I apprehensively switched on the radio for every news bulletin for the next day or two - but, of course, it proved to be an empty boast, probably intended to frighten the 'spies' into revealing their identities by going on the run. When I took part in a house-to-house distribution of a reprint of the document, I was amazed at the number of plain-clothes police who materialised in cars and on motor cycles in a quiet London suburb within minutes of a householder's phone call.

A week or so later I happened to be a guest at a posh function (wearing one of my other hats), and the loyal toast was drunk. On an impulse, when everyone else murmured 'The Queen!', I raised my glass with 'The Spies for Peace!' in my loudest voice. It caused a bit of a sensation. There must be hundreds of similar anecdotes to be collected, and if the story were to appear as a book it would soon be snapped up for television and the cinema.

Another item in your issue no 8 in which I have a personal interest is the review by Diana Shelley of Ron Bailey's book The Squatters. After conducting a one-woman campaign in the mid-60s against the GLC (in private correspondence, through the local press, and so on) for leaving houses empty for years on end while thousands were homeless or badly overcrowded, I was delighted to receive a phone call from Jim Radford to say that a local offshoot of the London Squatters Campaign was being formed. Later I chaired the big meeting at Lewisham Town Hall that inaugurated the Lewisham Family Squatting Association and eventually the whole family-squatting movement. The phrase 'Family Squatting' was also suggested by me, as a compromise between our respectable supporters and the revolutionaries.

Diana Shelley castigates the family-squatting 'activists' for making decisions on behalf of the squatters. Yet she also (rightly, I think) points to the irony of a squatting association carrying out evictions when faced with trouble-makers and rent-strikers among their own members. She really cannot have it both ways, for it was mainly the activists (including myself) who protested against eviction for those who were living off their backs. Since we had made it a matter of policy from the outset that the squatting families should have the majority say in decision-making, we activists were out-voted.

Because she, personally, is strong enough to squat unofficially, with all the insecurity that this involves, Diana Shelley ought not to assume that all homeless people are able to take on the authorities in this way. And, whilst I agree that single people and childless couples are as much in need of housing as families are, the latter are far more vulnerable to insecurity and threats of violence, as well as finding it that much more difficult to obtain a accommodation in the private sector. So, with our limited resources, we have concentrated on helping people with children.

Yours sincerely
BARBARA SMOKER
6 Stanstead Grove, London SE6

Support

Dear Mr Balfour

Thank you for details about and a sample copy of INSIDE STORY. While I wholeheartedly support your presentation of the reverse of the coin, I am old enough to feel that I have seen it all before.

Your reportage is one-sided (and this is no criticism), but I am happy that someone is doing what you are doing, so

I enclose a cheque for the standard £3 sub, but please do not send me any more copies. Perhaps I am to blame that I find one-sided reportage such as yours not greatly preferable to the Daily Express or Morning Star, but, good luck, all the same. You are doing - in the present imperfect state of journalism - a valuable job.

Yours sincerely
LLEW WILLIAMS
Trehale House, Mathay, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire

Prospective subscribers who feel they have seen it all before should not be discouraged: their money helps to pay for the free copies we send to people who want to read them.

SOS

Peace! Brothers/Sisters

When or if you receive this SOS I hope it finds everyone at INSIDE STORY in the best of revolutionary health. Would you please send us political prisoners some old, new INSIDE STORYs. We are in dire need of reading material. Plus we have some nice prison stories and poems you can print in your paper. If so let us know. Would you send us some names and addresses of the underground papers in London. Please reply soon!

BROTHER RALPH (RALPH BALDWIN)
No H-9009, Box 244, Graterford,
Pennsylvania 19426, USA

Readers who want to write to Bro Ralph or send books, papers etc should note that Graterford State Correctional Institution insists: 'All letters to inmate must bear full name and address of sender on envelope.' Also, please inform INSIDE STORY if anything is stopped.

Watchdog

Dear Friends

Under the assumption that all the media are manipulated by and on behalf of the establishment there is a vital need to express the general public's reaction to this situation. I think that as consumers and readers people should defend their rights to protect socie y from its daily brainwashing. A central agency must conduct this effort: we need a big Anti-Press Council to act as a watchdog against Fleet Street.

The agency must secure contact and cooperation with the many thousands of organisations, committees, groups etc concerned. Everybody would be interested in backing the idea of complaints against the media.

Maybe they would be willing to subscribe to an inexpensive monthly readers/listeners/viewers defence letter: this could be the main focus of a movement of this kind. Perhaps the production of this letter could be done with the help of the People's News Service. Also, as a national organisation, the National Council for Civil Liberties could start special work in this field.

But before anything is decided we need to set up a study group.

Yours faithfully
C HARRIS
187a Seven Sisters Road, London N4
(telephone 01-272 0105)

INSIDE STORY is produced by Alan Balfour (circulation), Peter Brookes (cover), Penny Brown (pictures), Ian Cameron and Jeremy Gray (research), Wynford Hicks (features), Claudine Meissner (design) and Nicolas Walter (reviews).

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bookshops

Below is a list of shops and distributors we supply with INSIDE STORY. British bookshops marked * specialise in political material: all foreign shops listed below do so. We will publish an updated list every six months as a service to readers, particularly those involved in the distribution of underground and political publications.

Since we began distributing INSIDE STORY ourselves a year ago a number of commercial shops and distributors have cancelled their orders while we have also found some new outlets. If you find it difficult to buy INSIDE STORY in your area, let us know which shops you think may be interested in stocking the magazine. Better still, persuade them to order copies direct from us. And, while you're waiting, why not subscribe and be sure of getting your copy (see back cover)? Don't forget that a subscription is worth more to us than it costs you.

ABERDEEN: James G Bisset, 99 High Street
BATH: *Workshop's Shop, 1a The Paragon
BELFAST: Wholesale News, 81-87 Academy Street
BEXHILL: Keala Wholesale, 17 Wickham Avenue
BIRMINGHAM: *Action Centre, 40 Hall Road, Handsworth; *Peace Centre, 18 Moor Street
BLACKBURN: *Anamus, 1-3 Market Street Lane
BRIGHTON: *Unicorn Bookshop 50 Gloucester Road, *Public House, 21 Little Preston Street
CAMBRIDGE: Cokaygne Bookshop, 1 Jesus Terrace, New Square; Student Bookshop, 21 Silver Street
COVENTRY: *The Left Centre, 65 Queen Victoria Road
DURHAM: Ivan Corbett, 89 Elvet Bridge
EDINBURGH: Better Books, 11 Forest Road
EXETER: C J Ford, 85-86 Queen Street
GLASGOW: Carlyle, 36 Albert Road
GUILDFORD: Mussel & Co, 278 High Street
HULL: Begus, 33 Princes Avenue
KEELE: Student Bookshop, University of Keele
LEAMINGTON: *Other Branch, 7 Regent Place
LEEDS: Nathan, 29 Cardigan Road
LEICESTER: *Black Flag Bookshop, 1 Wilne Street; University Bookshop, Mayors Walk
LONDON E1: *Freedom Bookshop, 84b Whitechapel High Street
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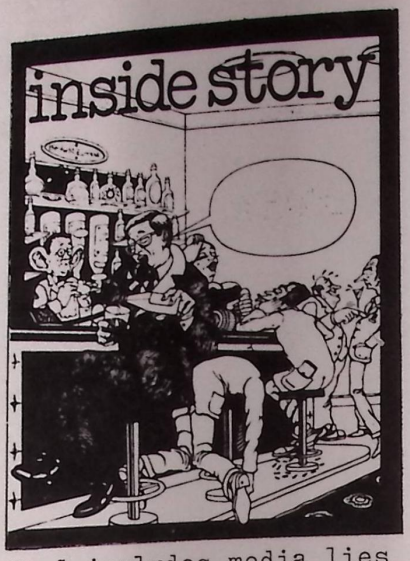

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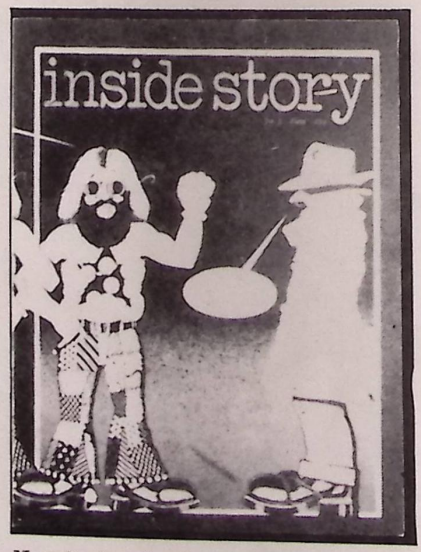

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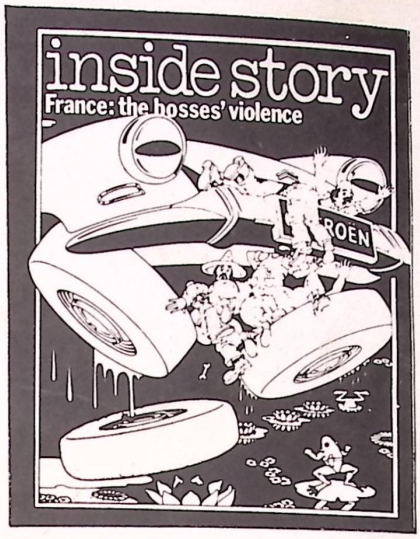

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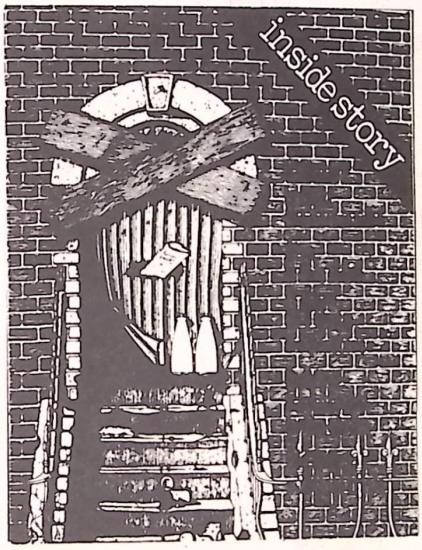

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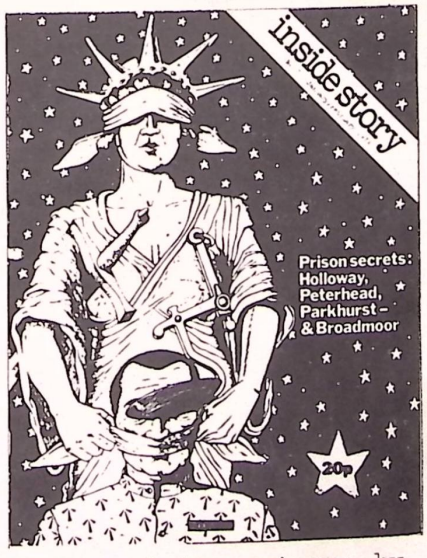

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